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# TALK

Michael Harmel

on

## SABRA'S POLICY

for Africa

...

## THE WOMEN'S ANTI-PASS CAMPAIGN

By Helen Joseph

...

"Can Congress Be Neutral  
In The Cold War?"

## THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

...

## THE MOZART BI-CENTENARY

...

BOOKS

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR DEMOCRATS



## NOUGHT FOR COMFORT

## COMMENT

**W**HILE press and radio have blazoned Mr. Louw's budget concessions to the mining magnates, industrialists and over-£1,800-a-year taxpayers, a veil of

### BUDGET FOR VULTURES

silence has been drawn over the almost simultaneous Government decision once again to raise the rents of municipal houses in African townships. Here, in these twin deeds, is revealed the real character of the Nationalist Government. For despite all its platform demagogy about the "Afrikaner volk" and "South Africa first", the Nationalist Party has become the voice and instrument of Afrikaner capitalism—farming, industrial and commercial. Its interest in the Afrikaner worker is confined to whipping up his racial passions, so that he dips his hand regularly in his pocket for the "Strydfonds", and regularly, every five years, votes "Nasionaal". For him, no budget concessions.

But its interest—if that is the word—in the Non-European people, is the interest of the vulture. Here is the prey on which South African capitalism battens and feeds; and none more voracious in their appetites than the Nationalist Government. For the Non-European people, greater burdens rather than concessions. For the famine-stricken Transkei, no relief. For the underpaid town worker, rent increases. For the unemployed African, no unemployment insurance. For the African children, a "ceiling" on expenditure on education. For the Indian merchants, Group Areas eviction on to the barren veld. For the trade unionist, arrest and prosecution for strike action. For the African building contractor and handyman, a prohibition on work in European areas. For the Non-European Railway workers, only "temporary" posts. For the African farmer, a compulsory culling of cattle. For the pass or permit offender, convict labour on European-owned farms.

It is customary for Ministers of Finance to congratulate themselves on their own skill when announcing lowered taxation in the budget speech. No one praises himself more fulsomely and admiringly than Mr. Louw. But even in his speech, the uneasy conscience shows; for nowhere, in all his words in Parliament, is there a single phrase to reveal the inhumanity and vicious victimisation of the Non-European peoples which makes tax concessions for the rich. Perhaps understandably. For bloodsucking has always been a nasty business, and none more successful at it than the present Nationalist cabinet.

**T**WENTY years ago in March, the African voters were formally removed from the common roll, and placed on their own, separate, voters roll, with the right to

### YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

"elect" their own—Europeans only—representatives to Parliament. The anniversary of Hertzog's Native Representation Act was solemnly celebrated by Strydom's Separate Representation of Voters Act, introduced for the second time, to do exactly that to the Coloured voters. It is worth noting that, at the same time, the air is heavy with Nationalist undertakings to abolish Parliamentary representation of Africans entirely, notwithstanding Hertzog's "undertakings" on the subject. Talk as the

Nationalists will about "the interests of the Coloureds", there is a logic about this process of preserving White supremacy by separating the Non-Whites. In the end, there will be no representation for anyone except the jabbroers. Twenty years might seem like a long time; but events—as everyone knows—move faster these days. If the European opposition parties, no less than the Coloured voters, don't look round soon, the breath of the executioner will be blowing down their own necks.

**U**NIVERSITY professors, traditionally, live in ivory towers. To this rule the members of the Tomlinson Commission are no exception. For while, in the country

### FROM IVORY TOWERS

outside, there is doubt on all sides whether the crazy structure erected by the Nationalists will hang together for another five years, in the rarified atmosphere of the Commission's ivory tower, there is planning for apartheid in the year 2,000 A.D.

A current story describes Dr. Verwoerd, in a moment of strain during an interview, bursting into tears and shouting aloud: "It's all breaking down!" There is, perhaps, more prophetic vision in this, than in the cloud-cuckoo-land dreamings of the Tomlinson Commission.

There was a time when the United Party—in typical self deception—sought to embarrass the Government by demanding the publication of the report. They have got their way; and though it surprises them, it will surprise no one else that they have been hoist by their own petard. For the Tomlinson Commission of venerable professors have taken over holus-bolus all the ideas and theories of the Nationalist Party, and accepted them as unimpeachable truth. The Commission is convinced that "the only solution is the separate development of European and Bantu." And from there on—like Nationalist stump-orators—the stops are out. Africans must be cleared from the Western Cape "to protect the Coloureds." The protectorates must be incorporated in Strydom's empire. The old, familiar Strydom tune.

Of the whole galaxy of university pundits, there is only one who dares to disagree. Professor Bisschop, dissenting, says: "The segregation formula must be fully investigated and tested out. If . . . it is found unpractical, and I greatly fear that it will be . . . progressive integration with its economic and political consequences will have to be accepted."

From the tone of the phrase, one almost expects the words "however distasteful they may be" to be added on. If the Tomlinson report is the intellectual "justification" for Nationalist race-theory, the Bisschop disclaimer could well serve as an epitaph on the self-styled "liberalism" which once had its home in the United Party.

Michael Harmel analyses the SABRA line

# HYSTERIA AND HISTORY

SOMETIMES the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) is spoken of as a "liberal" section of the Afrikaners, a sort of Afrikaans version of the Institute of Race Relations. I am no believer in the efficacy of the R.R.I.'s brand of cautious reformism, in these times of roaring reaction, but credit must be paid where it is due. The Institute is usually distinguished by the factual and objective character of its surveys and reports. It is doing it an injustice to compare it in any way to SABRA, which is seldom factual and never objective. In its attempts to provide a theoretical and "ideological" justification for apartheid and other

Governmental policies, SABRA is, in the nature of its case, little able to rely on facts and logic. It prefers the sweeping racial generalisation. It tends to rant and rave.

These characteristics were well illustrated by the recent annual SABRA conference at Port Elizabeth, on the theme: "The Asian and Africa". Some of the papers delivered at this conference have been printed and circulated, at public expense, by the State Information Office. They afford a revealing insight into the mentality of the Nationalist intellectuals and theoreticians.

## Taking Sides Against Colonial Freedom

### Blind to Reality

Dr. Geyer — ex-editor of *Die Burger* and former Union High Commissioner in London — struck the keynote in his opening address, by mourning the melancholy fact of the "disappearance of the West European nations as colonial powers in Asia". "With minor exceptions", he pointed out, "the great colonial empires of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands no longer exist . . . We of the West have to take account of this". Dr. Geyer then proceeds to attack what he calls "Indian imperialism", though he fails to make it quite clear why imperialism should be a Good Thing when it is imposed by "we of the West", and otherwise a Bad Thing.

*"This continent . . . must offer a vastly tempting prize for Indian imperialism, for the overcrowded, half-starved millions of that over-populated country, for the keen Indian traders, and for Mr. Nehru's ambition to become the leader of the world's coloured peoples".*

Thus, baldly, does Dr. Geyer set the tone for what is to follow from the other speakers. He links this up with the old song of "Indian penetration" and "Indian infiltration" in South Africa and elsewhere. The Indians in Africa were of course not sent by Mr. Nehru. But a small detail like that could not really worry Dr. Geyer and his colleagues.

Indians, he says, "have what amounts to an economic stranglehold on Uganda". They "dominate the economic life of Kenya". "The island of Mauritius already is to all intents and purposes an Indian colony."

Well, well. If Dr. Geyer can believe all that, he can believe anything. Uganda and Kenya are British colonies; Mauritius a French one: these imperialist powers have been at very considerable military and administrative expense, these recent years, in order to preserve their domination. And this is of course very closely related to the millions of pounds worth of lucratively invested capital they have exported to these colonies. Against this enormous and glaring reality, Dr. Geyer places the activities of local retail shopkeepers of Indian origin, and calls it "domination". This fantastic sort of blindness to reality makes it impossible to take the theoreticians of SABRA at all seriously.

Just as unreal and biased are the "historical" assertions, in another paper read to the conference and published by the Government, read by Mr. W. van Heerden, editor of *Dagbreek*. Mr. van Heerden's aim is

to show "the immeasurable blessings which a half-century of Western colonisation had brought for the Black peoples of Africa".

Naturally, Mr. van Heerden's starting-point is the "darkness" and backwardness of the peoples of Africa prior to European conquest. He quotes Professor Raymond Dart as his authority for saying that "not one of the indigenous races of Southern Africa invented or created any of their own meagre cultural or technical possessions". Unfortunately for Mr. van Heerden's thesis, Professor Dart's researches indicate that these "blessings" were conferred on Africa not from Europe but from Asia. And it might be added that, to an enormous extent, the civilisation of Europe itself was a gift from the highly-developed ancient civilisations of Asia and the African civilisation of Egypt.

Mr. van Heerden cannot deny this credit to Asia. But he adds that there is also a debit side: "superstitions (i.e., religious beliefs other than Mr. van Heerden's) and unacceptable social practices from Asia". And "above all on the debit side, was the slave trade".

He makes much of the Arab slave trade—"continued unbroken for more than 2,000 years, until the Western opposition to this custom . . . brought it to an end". And he mentions that "Western nations had previously started following the example of the Arabian and other Eastern hunters of men, and had begun to capture slaves in West Africa".

One would never gather from Mr. van Heerden, that the "Western" imperialist nations had carried out their ruthless slave-hunting operations on a scale and with a thoroughness undreamed of by the Arabs, so that, to this day, populations of millions of people of African descent in North and South America, in the West Indies, in Haiti and elsewhere, bear irrefutable witness to the vast depredations of the White manhunters.

To do Mr. van Heerden justice, he does not claim that the conquest of Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century was carried out for any idealistic or humanitarian motives. In a very true and striking passage, he says:

*"The chief motive among all the Western powers was the exploitation of the natural wealth and the development of the economic potentialities that their territories might reveal. And it speaks for itself that an important element in this programme was the gigantic labour reserve that existed among Africa's indigenous peoples".*



Quite. But in asking that the "West" now be given credit for the "innumerable blessings" it has conferred on Africa, Mr. van Heerden promptly forgets these selfish and sordid motives of robbery which brought about European conquest of Africa, or the terrible price which has been paid. "With greedy haste", he writes, "the various powers entered into "treaties" with the chiefs of indigenous tribes, and on this basis as well as on the basis of other methods of persuasion . . . the whole of Africa (was) cut up into colonies of the European powers". What were these "other methods", Mr. van Heerden? How much African blood was spilt? How many tribesmen, armed with assegais and shields, were mown down by rifles and machine guns?

### **The Price to Africa**

Mr. van Heerden does not particularise very much on the 'innumerable blessings' of having Europeans rule one's country and take away one's land. Colonisation "freed the native people from the horrors and terrors of the slave trade". (But replaced these terrors and horrors with those of forced proletarianisation, alienation of land, imposition of taxes, regimentation for mines and plantations). "The absolute power which chiefs and witch doctors held over the lives and property of every man and woman was ended". (It was replaced by the absolute power of foreign rulers, of chiefs thousands of miles away whom the people could not even see.) "For the first time in millenia Africa learnt what personal security in a fairly ordered society meant". (Personal security in colonial Africa! Surely the man is dreaming!) "The people were given the aid of modern medicine against tropical ills". (And given syphilis and tuberculosis just to even up the balance).

It is quite true that imperialism has brought economic, political and cultural revolution throughout Africa: though from selfish motives and at terrible cost. It has broken up the ancient tribal systems, and thus released forces and created possibilities of a great step forward for Africa in the economic, political, cultural and every other field. But having opened up these possibilities, imperialism itself stands in the way of their realisation. It rests like a vast barricade across the road to African advancement. That is why the people of Africa today, from North to South are demanding and organising for freedom, independence and self-government.

Mr. van Heerden does not understand this process. He does not understand that as a result of precisely the same process, which has welded vast populations into an irresistible force, more than 1,200 million people, almost half the world's population, have emancipated themselves from colonial bondage within the last brief decade.

### **Not Voluntary!**

When he sees that the imperialists have been kicked out of one country after another, in Asia and North Africa, he attributes this to a voluntary, benevolent withdrawal by "the West", which results from an "attitude of mind which had arisen in the West as a reaction against Hitler's Herrenvolk philosophy". "Colonialism had now become something which filled the West with a sort of shame". "For the first time in history European powers in Africa took away a territory (Abyssinia) from one of their number and handed it over to the indigenous inhabitants". (Mr. van Heerden's own, horrified, italics).

"The powers", he says, "apologise for their presence

in colonial territories, in as far as their stay is not yet ended; and they agree among one another to act even faster and to leave the territories as soon as they possibly can". This is rather an odd description of Britain's long, tenacious and bloody measures to retain Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus, and France's to stay in Indo-China and North Africa. When they are forced to get out they try to save some prestige and save their faces by pretending they meant to leave all the time. This is what Mr. van Heerden mistakes for apologies.

Just as Mr. van Heerden fails to understand the tremendous drive for national liberation in Asia and North Africa, which has compelled the colonial powers to retreat and which has placed the abolition of the colonial system on the top of the agenda, so he fails to appreciate the enormous impact this has had on the peoples of Central and Southern Africa. The very factors which have brought the victorious upsurge in Asia have been at work in our continent too. The victories of the Indian, Burmese, Chinese, Indonesian, Syrian, Sudanese and other formerly oppressed peoples could not but raise the hopes, aspirations and efforts of the African people to a very high level.

What could be more natural that, on the morrow of their own emancipation, the people of India and other former colonies, should look upon the peoples still in colonial bondage, with sympathy and encouragement?

### **"Evidence"**

To Mr. van Heerden, however, this natural sympathy, expressed at the United Nations and the Bandung conference and elsewhere, appears to be something very sinister. It is a result of India's "imperialistic ambitions in Africa".

"One could hardly pay Mr. Nehru the doubtful compliment of believing him when he claims to be a disinterested party", he says. Passing over Mr. van Heerden's manners (as a White South African he feels, no doubt, that he can dispense with courtesy in speaking of a Non-European leader), let us examine his grounds for alleging that the Prime Minister of India supports the struggle against colonialism and racial inequality, not, as he says, on principle, but because he has territorial ambitions in our continent.

He says he has "enough evidence". What is it?

- (1) A resolution passed in 1919 by the East African Indian Congress asking the League of Nations and Britain to reserve Tanganyika for Indian settlement.
- (2) An alleged proposal by a member in the Indian Upper House that the Government should ask Britain to transfer the Tanganyika mandate to India. (Apparently the proposal was rejected).
- (3) A speech by Sir Maharajah Singh expressing the belief that Mauritius would one day become "a colony of India".
- (4) That India has appointed a Commissioner in Accra on the Gold Coast, who gives out 3,000 free copies of "India News" every week.

Having enumerated the above collection of completely unconvincing and irrelevant statements, Mr. van Heerden says one must accept "the obvious conclusion that India has indeed imperial ambitions in Africa". And having stated this "obvious conclusion" he goes on to say—without any "evidence" at all this time,—

(Continued on next page)



## ON THE ANTI-PASS CAMPAIGN

By Helen Joseph

## ANGRY WOMEN

WIDESPREAD over the Union there is an uneasy stirring, an apprehension, as African women and men become aware of the threat of passes for women, more so in the towns and cities than in the countryside, for there is as yet but little official publicity for this attack upon the jealously guarded freedom of African women. Verwoerd has not yet called the chiefs together to inform them of his "benevolent" intentions towards African women, to explain the inestimable "benefits" of passes for women. But in many urban areas and in the main centres of the Union, African women are militant, angry, determined.

For the past six months, ever since Verwoerd's first curt announcement in September of last year that 1956 would see the introduction of passes for women, African women on the Reef and elsewhere have been active, organising and educating themselves and others.

Congress branches have made the anti-pass campaign the main focus of their activities. Resentment has

**SABRA***(Continued from page 4)*

"the approximately 750,000 Indians in Southern Africa give, almost without exception, their undivided loyalty to India, and it is easy to understand why these people, in the light of India's imperialistic aims in Africa, already form a wooden horse within the walls of Troy".

He invents "India's imperialistic aims". He invents the "undivided loyalty" of a large number of Africans to India. On the strength of these two inventions he brands three quarters of a million people as fifth columnists. You must make your own comment, for mine is hardly printable.

**Whose Disloyalty?**

If we are to talk about wooden horses, we should far better turn our attention to Mr. van Heerden and his friends. He expresses quite clearly, as has Dr. Geyer, to whom he owes an "undivided loyalty". It is not to Africa, but to Western imperialism. He says so. Just as Dr. Geyer refers to the Conference as "We of the West," so Mr. van Heerden says "we in South Africa, more than any of the *other* influences or forces of the West, are fated to determine whether Africa will seek to join the East or the West".

It is strange that Mr. van Heerden cannot see that precisely what he pretends to see as a disloyalty to Africa among Africans of Indian descent, is present in himself and his associates: loyalty not to Africa but to a real (not an imaginary) imperialism.

In one of his rare flashes of illumination and candour, Mr. van Heerden concludes with the true statement: "It is certain that the era of White authority is soon to end". And, "the coming era will be for us and the Black peoples of Africa, an era of either friendship or enmity".

That question will depend very largely upon whether the Africans of European descent will co-operate as equals and fellow-citizens in the building of free Africa, or whether they are going to act, as SABRA and others advocate, as agents and fifth columnists for the hateful system of imperialist colonialism.

been seething and has been canalised in the Germiston area into a demonstration to the Native Commissioner. Four areas, Germiston itself, Natalspruit, Alberton and Elsburg joined in this demonstration. Police intimidation reached new levels with threats to the women of shooting, imprisonment, with false statements that the Native Commissioner had, despite written agreement, refused to meet the women and had sent the police to tell them so—strange messengers for such an errand, even for the Native Affairs Department! But the women continued to meet publicly, defiantly, privately at dead of night as organisers sped from place to place. Driving into a township late one night, the organisers met a group of women, guided by torches, making their way home in the darkness after a long and fruitless wait. "It is *our* people". And back went the little procession and the meeting was held in a crowded house. On to another area, even later now. "Will the women wait for us? It is nearly midnight". But there they were, men and women together, with tales of intimidation, told by lamplight, by candlelight, and shrugged off with a laugh.

Final plans were made and the following morning hundreds of women went in dignity to the office of the Native Commissioner in Germiston, escorted by flying squad cars—to present to him their objections . . . "We are opposed to passes for women. We shall not rest until we have won for our children their right to freedom and security". Over three hundred women came courageously to Germiston, the old and the young, and the babies were there too. I saw a man feeding a baby with a bottle as it clung to its mother's back. He said "When the women went to Pretoria, the men were told to feed the children. Now we are doing it again today".

**Tell Strydom!**

The following week, Johannesburg saw the greatest gathering of women yet held—more than a thousand women, followed by over five hundred men, came to the Trades Hall, there to protest and resolve to fight to the bitter end against the passes, to return again to Pretoria, to demand to see Strydom, since Verwoerd had run away. This was no emotional decision, it was introduced in a speech, dramatic in its understatement, moved quietly but accepted by 2,000 women and men with determination and enthusiasm. The women knew full well the implications of this decision: the women of Bethal, of Venterspost, of Klerksdorp, of Pretoria. There, too, were the women of the Reef, of Germiston and Brakpan, of every town from Springs to Randfontein, of every area in Johannesburg, the western areas, the south-western areas, Alexandra Township. Coloured women from Benoni came triumphantly together with the Indian women, parading their solidarity with all women in this struggle to receive a heartening welcome from hundreds of African women as they threaded their way through the already crowded hall. Indian women from Fordsburg, from Evaton, European women of the Congress movement—all too few—but here could be seen again the vast gathering of women who went to Pretoria, accepting now their responsibility to all African women, resolving to unite together in the struggle against passes for women.



It was Women's Day!—with the Indian youth performing noble Herculean tasks in the kitchen, prepared for one thousand delegates, and feeding two thousand! Not enough room, not enough seats for all these men and women who had come from so far. First an appeal to the men "Let the women sit, you must stand"; then to the women "Let the older women sit, the young women must stand". At five minutes to six, the hall was still as crowded as at noon, as the last resolutions were moved—the next stage of the campaign had been set. "Now for Pretoria!" The great crowd spilled out, down the stairs, into the waiting lorries, along the streets to railway stations and bus ranks. The hall stood empty—only the banners remained, proudly blazoning the ten slogans of the Freedom Charter. But the spirit of the people was still there, determined, a challenge to fascism and oppression.

### **Winburg**

This was in Johannesburg, in the Transvaal. And other centres, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, all had been organising—but what of the Free State with its small towns, its scattered locations, the Free State where Verwoerd had threatened first to introduce passes for women? And this was no empty threat. For only four days after the great women's Conference, came the shattering news: "Winburg women have taken passes"—Winburg, where forty years ago hundreds of women had defied, sacrificed and suffered, and had ultimately defeated the Free State pass laws! The true story was anxiously awaited—how could this have happened? And the true story is shameful—but the shame is that of the authorities—not of the women. The disgraceful underhand methods of the supposedly responsible Department of Native Affairs stand exposed in all their trickery. First notices, announcing that the women of Winburg must apply for reference books—posted where? Not in the location, but at the Town Hall, which Africans may not use, and at the Magistrate's Court, where they go only for trials. No announcement was made to the Advisory Board, but on Monday, March 12, twelve policemen paraded the dusty streets of Winburg, informing the women that on the following day they must report to the Magistrate's Court for their passes. The Winburg women received this announcement with indignation; on the following morning many hundreds marched to the magistrate to tell him that they did not want passes, to demand to know whence came this threat to their freedom. There they met hundreds of other women from the farms, herded there by their employers, ignorant, unaware, brought like slaves for their branding. Angry protests went unheeded and then officials weighed in with smooth poisoned propaganda, empty promises of false security: "These are not passes for your persecution; they are for your benefit, to help you. By these blessed books we shall find your husbands when they are lost to you in the evil cities. You will be able to travel with these books—you will not need permits—and you will not need to carry the books at any other time. And you women of the farms, these books will bring you freedom, for now you will not have to get permits to go into the location". With such honeyed words did the Native Affairs Department officials soothe the fears of the older women and the women of the farms. And they took the passes. Fourteen hundred women took the reference books, stamped as such, snugly fitted into little cases, provided with a string to go round the neck, the chain of slavery.

But the women of Winburg do not bear their passes proudly; they are ashamed, unhappy, for they begin to realise what they have done. Young women cry to them "We shall curse you in your graves". For despite the many who have taken the pass, there are many more who have not, who say they will not. In Winburg location there are 35,000 people.

### **Tragedy to Triumph**

The unit of treachery has left Winburg for the time being and before returning it will go—where? The authorities do not, dare not, say—for they fear resistance. Their only hope of success is the present gangster method, a smash and grab raid here, a hit-and-run attack there, false promises, untruths, betrayal of the people.

The campaign nevertheless goes on with gathering strength. The tragedy of the women of Winburg can yet be turned into a victory, for the news of this trickery, this deceiving of the African women, will fill women and men with anger throughout the country. Nor will Winburg be the only place where this will happen. We may expect to hear of repetitions of this "triumph" of the Department of Native Affairs from many small towns and country places in the Free State. The poisoned approach may yet make inroads into the Transvaal, the Cape, Natal, but the African women and the Congress movement must be undismayed; this is to be expected at the beginning of the struggle. This Government can attack only the weaker parts—these gaps can be, must be, closed by determined action. Let the women of South Africa rally to the aid of the women of the Free State, to help them, to organise them, so that they may feel once again the strength that bore them, after years of struggle, to triumphant victory against the passes nearly forty years ago.

*(Continued from page 7)*

said, "most of the publicity is being given to the Government, and its attitude—and we know what that is. But not so much is given to the policy and actions of the trade union movement, or to an important section of the Labour Party, or to the many associations throughout Britain who are constantly battling away against the suppression of the people in the colonies. The ordinary people here," he said, "are decent, sincere. And they don't approve of suppression anywhere, even though they haven't get got around to stopping it yet."

"I'll tell you one thing," he said, tapping the table for emphasis. "The attitude of people here is something good for the future. The days of the Empire and its colonies are numbered. Nothing can save it. And back home, the Nationalists decide their policy from panic, because they know nothing can save it!"

We finished our drinks on that thought, and then chatted awhile about our work and our friends. Somehow, we were feeling like South Africans in London. We were feeling a rare satisfaction that we had been able to meet, as friends, in a public place, and talk and drink in a natural, civilised way. We were feeling contempt and hatred for the vicious men, whose vicious theories of race made this ordinary, human meeting of South Africans only possible abroad. We were feeling, stronger than ever, the compulsion to fight against racialism until it is driven out from our country for ever—until three people can meet where they like, and have a drink and talk together, in peace.



**"Into a world free of the colour-bar?"** In London, CECIL WILLIAMS interviewed JAMES PHILLIPS, South Africa's "Paul Robeson", now living and working in England, studying singing there, and doing extra-work in films.

## A DRINK IN PEACE

JAMES, Maud and I ran quickly down the stairs to the warm pub, glad to be out of the softly falling snow, which was transforming the statue in Picadilly Circus from a grey to a white Eros. As we loosened scarves and took off gloves, James ordered drinks, and we started nibbling crisps and olives. Aware of the questions I intend putting James, I consciously noted the fact that two Coloured people and one White man had entered a pub, ordered drinks and commenced to chat, with no disturbance, no interference and not even a raised eyebrow from the waiter or the people at the next table.

And in point of fact, when you come to think of it, that is all that need be said. Three people of different skin colours ordered drinks, paid for them and drank them—together. No one was hurt; business went on as usual, and the statue outside didn't topple over in an apoplectic fit.

However I wanted to find out James' feelings and experiences. He has been in London for sixteen months now, but remembers vividly the first few days. He recalls the strange, unbelieving feelings that accompanied his venturings into a world that was—almost—free of colour bars.

James had heard from South Africans who had been here before that colour bars and race prejudice do not exist here. So on the day after his arrival, he decided to roam about London on his own, at random. "I started from Trafalgar Square, and strangely enough found myself outside South Africa House", he said. "I moved away, hurriedly! And, of course, I got lost". James did what most Londoners do—but few Coloured South Africans do at home. He asked a policeman for directions. "He very kindly took me by the arm, and called me 'Sir.' That was the first time in my life I had been addressed that way. And by a policeman!" James began to realise how far he had travelled since he left Johannesburg. "I was more familiar with policemen who say 'Baster,' 'Hotnot' and 'Kaffir,'" he said. So roaming on he came to the National Gallery, and for the first time in his life walked into an art gallery, and saw the original work of great painters whose names he had only heard of and read about in books.

Round about lunch time, James made for the nearest restaurant. "I gazed through the window, and I wasn't sure if I would be welcomed there," he said. "So I moved on. And I felt the same way at the next place. I think I must have stopped outside a dozen of them before I plucked up the courage to go in. I felt pretty embarrassed. I imagined everyone there was staring at me. But I knew I was all right when the waitress came up and again used that little word 'Sir.' I'll admit I blushed, and fumbled about a bit, and I didn't enjoy the meal at all—I was so conscious of the presence of White people all round me. But except for a casual glance here or there, no one really took any special notice of me."

That was the way that James broke the London ice. "Did you have any difficulty finding a place to stay?" I asked him. His white teeth flashed, and he smiled. "Well, that has had its problems," he said, "It's difficult

enough for anyone to get reasonable, decent accommodation. At first go off, though, I found a nice room quite easily. But then my mother and son arrived, and I had to find a bigger place. And then I had some trouble. I interviewed housing agents and landlords without any success. Many of them asked for 'references'. Gradually I began to detect a prejudice against foreigners and Coloured people."

"How did that show itself?" I asked.

"Different ways," he told me. "Plenty of times I confirmed by phone that a place was vacant, but as soon as I hurried over to see it—and be seen myself—I was told it had already been taken. Once on the phone, I was asked whether I was 'a White or a Black South African?' And a friend of mine had the door slammed in his face, after he had been told—South African style—that 'No Blacks are admitted here.'" James summed up his experiences with the phrase: "Prejudice is taking root here in many ways."

I asked him how he accounted for this. He thought for a moment. "Of course, some landlords have had trouble with Coloured tenants the same as with Whites," he said. "But the press, I find, always seems to play up any small incident in which Coloureds are concerned, giving prominence to incidents which do not justify headlines like 'Coloured landlord evicts White tenant!' This all has its effect." He reflected for a minute, and then he added: "Of course in relation to the whole population, the degree of race prejudice is minute—it really is. And there doesn't seem to be any of that absolute 'race fanaticism' that is so common back home."

I had also read a lot in the newspapers about colour prejudices, about White workers who refused to work with Coloureds, and also about the other side of it—about the way the trade unions are fighting race discrimination. So I asked James about his experiences in finding a job.

"Well, bear in mind," he said, "that I haven't been out of Greater London. Things seem to be worse in other places, Liverpool, Birmingham and so on. But here in London, my troubles were not caused by my colour. The Garment and Tailoring Workers Union is only about thirty per cent. organised around London, and a union card doesn't make it easy to get a job. Of several factories I've worked in, only one was a Union shop. But the workers everywhere have been friendly, and gradually I've become accustomed to being 'just one of them,' no longer strange, no longer conscious that I am 'different.' They like me, and I like them. And that's how it should be, everywhere."

"One more question, James. How do you account for the scarcity of race prejudice here, among people who still tolerate the suppression of Coloured people in Kenya, Malaya? "I think their condemnation of racialism in South Africa is honest and sincere," he stated. "On several occasions when I have addressed meetings, I in turn have listened to many people who not only sympathised with us, but who wanted to know what could be done." "On the questions of Malaya and Kenya," he

*(Continued on previous page)*

PATRICK DUNCAN argues the Liberal Viewpoint—

## A PLEA FOR NEUTRALITY

THE correspondence about the Liberal Party which has appeared in your columns, beginning with Peter Meyer's criticism, continuing with Claude Frank's defence, and further continuing in February with letters from Messrs. Bernstein and Storm, is of importance both to Liberals and to readers of *Fighting Talk*.

I write as a recently-joined member of the Liberal Party, and my letter is in no way official. It seems to me that though there is a lot in the criticisms of the Party that have appeared, there is also a lot to be said in its favour. Mr. Bernstein is right in his attack on the timorous and wavering remarks made in the handbook on cooperation with other bodies. Some Liberals would like to revise the handbook in this and other respects. But I think that the main points in favour of the Liberal Party have not yet been made. May I now make some of them?

Firstly, it is the only political party or organisation in South Africa which has in fact made no concession to the colour-bar. It may be objected that the C.O.D. is in the same position. But the C.O.D. has close links with the A.N.C. If it were to recruit, say, African members, how would it reconcile this with these links?

Secondly, it is the only party in South Africa which, while absolutely opposed to discrimination or colour-bars of any kind, does not align itself with the Russians and Chinese in the cold war. Anyone who might misunderstand the line taken by *Fighting Talk* in the cold war need only read the attacks on U.S.A. foreign policy on pp. 1, 8, and 9 of the February issue. Anyone who does not know the line taken by the A.N.C. need only turn back the files and read the anti-American resolutions passed at Queenstown in 1955.

Thirdly the Liberal Party has no desire or plan to get control of the

A.N.C. Such a plan formed part of the strategy of the Communist Party of South Africa—see para. 121 of the "Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of South Africa to the National Conference, January 6, 7, and 8, 1950, which reads: "The National organisations (meaning the A.N.C. and Indian congresses) to be effective, must be transformed into a revolutionary party of workers . . ." Must be transformed by whom? Under whose guidance? Under that of the drafters of this paragraph, the Communists, of course, who are, let it be said, non-Africans in the majority. So the policy laid down in 1950, and adhered to since, has changed the character of the A.N.C. It has ceased to be a body of Africans, led by Africans and quite independent of White control: it has been partly "transformed" by non-Africans into the sort of body that will play the part that they wish it to in the world crisis of today. This

was not the purpose for which the A.N.C. was set up. Can a political body change its fundamental character so radically? The failure to endorse the Freedom Charter would seem to give a partial answer to this question.

I said above that the Liberal Party is absolutely opposed to discrimination of any kind. I base this statement on the Party's franchise policy which will be found on p. 9 of the handbook. There it is clearly stated that the policy is a vote for every man and woman in South Africa.

At the present time there are disadvantages attaching to every party in our country, and the Liberals do not have a monopoly of positions that are hard to defend.

If the A.N.C. would make a declaration of neutrality in the cold war, they would find the Liberal Party fighting shoulder to shoulder with them in the fight for liberation.

## "THEY'RE AIMING AT US . . ."

says a leading member of the African National Congress, writing on the Cold War

IS the African National Congress "anti-American"? Does it "align itself with the Russians and the Chinese in the Cold War"? Could the A.N.C. "make a declaration of neutrality in the cold war"?

These are questions basic to an understanding of the foreign policy of the national movement.

Our foreign policy flows from the fundamental principles of Congress struggle: the right of freedom and self-government for all peoples; and world peace in which these freedoms and rights could be enjoyed. This is a policy diametrically opposed to that of South Africa's Government. The Nationalists have become a by-word for policies of ugly race superiority and White domination, and these policies are intimately connected, in turn, with the Union Government's foreign policy. When he returned from overseas recently, the Minister of Defence, Mr. Erasmus told Parliament that the Government had entered into certain military commitments with the Western imperialist powers to send troops out of South

Africa to the Middle East and elsewhere. Mr. Erasmus said that Africa was "the greatest prize on earth and it had to be secured for the West. The question was what measures the Western world was prepared to take to retain its hold on Africa". It is for this purpose that our Government commits our country to military blocs. It allies itself with the "Western Bloc" in order to help the Colonial powers retain their hold over the people of Africa by putting down their movements for national freedom against colonialism.

Here, indeed, is the crux of the matter.

The Cold War is justified by the statement of the West, our own included, as an assault against the evils of Communism. Yet the only open war being carried on today are aimed at putting down colonial peoples and perpetuating colonial rule just as the Nationalist attacks on the National movements of our people are justified by the need for "fighting Communism", "preserving Western civilisation".

Congress cannot and does not stand aloof and disinterested from such events. Like the national movements of the rest of Africa and of Asia, our aims are independence and freedom, and our opponents fight us with the cries of the cold war. Their policy has led to open war in Malaya, in Kenya, in Cyprus and in North Africa. In each of these countries the form of oppression and restrictive rule differ only in their details. But the similarities between the aims of our struggle and those of the national movements everywhere are glaring and daily more compelling.

We see the forces in the world today as of two great camps: those for independence and equality of all peoples; and those set on perpetuating the old inequalities between master and subject race, and the exploitation and enforced inferiority of colonial peoples.

We are in the thick of this fight and cannot be expected to declare for neutrality.

It is natural that we should seek allies in this fight and to discover our

friends from our enemies. We welcome support from whatever source it might come. We can not be indifferent to the fact that it has been India, the Soviet Union, the Eastern Democracies, the Arab countries which pressed in the United Nations for the support of our fight against colour discrimination. This alignment of powers was natural and inevitable.

The emergence of the Asian and African liberation movements is one of the great historic events of our time.

Last year's conference at Bandung in Indonesia symbolised this. Here the representatives of hundreds of millions of people from Africa and Asia met together in great conference. The peoples of the world could and should live together in peace, no matter what their social and political opinions, said the Bandung Conference. The 29 countries represented there decided that all people should have the right to govern themselves, no matter their race or colour.

The African National Congress had an observer at this conference and we

## "Kenya—We Must Make Peace"

"10,000 killed in three years.

"70,000 held in prison camps.

"The killing still goes on. In Kenya there is a war—while all the world talks of peace. It is urgent, terribly urgent that it be stopped.

"This is a war just as much as a battle between two powerful European states. Men are killed and mutilated. Women bereaved. Children orphaned. Homes destroyed. Crops ruined. Sorrow, anger, hate flourish.

"In the last few months there has been a welcome lessening of international tension all over the world. The spirit of peaceful co-existence has grown stronger. And everywhere people have been happier because the prospects for peace have been strengthened.

"But there is a terrible contradiction. We cannot with sincerity demand peace only for ourselves. What of the colonial peoples who are ruled by Britain? We are responsible for whatever war takes place in the colonies.

"If peace is murdered in Kenya we are responsible.

"It must be stopped. WE must stop it.

"NEGOTIATE NOW!

"The Africans want to stop the war; the British people want to stop it; the British and Kenya Governments must be made to stop it—they must be made to NEGOTIATE!"

This is an extract of an appeal launched in Britain by the Kenya Committee which is urging the British people to send letters for peace negotiations in Kenya to the British & Kenya Governments.

associated ourselves with its decisions, above all with the five Afro-Asian principles of co-existence:

1. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.
2. No interference in the internal affairs of other nations.
3. Equality of all races and nations.
4. No threats or acts of aggression.
5. Peaceful co-existence; peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for international obligations.

On questions of national independence and freedom we must take sides. We condemn emphatically every fresh assault on the rights of colonial peoples. We welcome the support for our cause from India, the Soviet Union and China.

That does not mean that we are committed to a policy of friendship with certain countries only; that we "gang up" with some powers and against others. The African National

Congress is not committed to any bloc in the Cold War. We would like to see the Cold War brought to an end.

But where under cover of an anti-Communist crusade, the Cold War is the pretext for attacks on colonial peoples, we must take a clear stand. We are anti-imperialist and for national independence.

By these criteria we judge our friends from our enemies.

From this standpoint we determine our attitude to specific events and issues in the world. We sympathise deeply with the aspirations of all peoples to govern themselves and to run their affairs free from domination by European or any other outside powers.

We will not be party to war plans and attacks against peoples and countries with whom we have no quarrel.

We condemn all resort to arms to perpetuate colonial rule. On these issues we cannot declare for neutrality. To do so would be to deny the justice of our own cause.

"Fighting Talk" invites readers' comments on this discussion



## A Bi-Centenary Article On - -

## MOZART

"SANS-CULOTTE"<sup>1</sup> is hardly the term that most of us would apply to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose 200th birthday fell on 27 January. But this title, whether bestowed in fun or in all seriousness by his contemporary Naumann,<sup>2</sup> is much more suited to the great composer than the usual popular conception of him as an elegant eighteenth-century gentleman, who as a child was embraced by Marie Antoinette and who in later life frequented the homes of the nobility and the imperial courts of Europe.

His more serious biographers, it is true, admit the falsity of this picture. They stress his unhappiness and poverty—but, with one or two exceptions, give the impression that he accepted them manfully and with a smile.

**Struggle Against Odds**

Mozart's music speaks for itself. But it speaks with far more poignancy and significance, if one knows something about his life and his letters. The impression one gets from these extraordinarily revealing human documents is—in spite of their sparkling humour, their tenderness and warmth—of a man struggling against odds in a cruel society; the underwell of his correspondence is an expression of extreme frustration, despair, and revolt.

Mozart was born into a period when a corrupt and all-powerful feudal aristocracy controlled the life and culture of his country, forcing artists and musicians into dependence on their patronage, and recognising merit only when it flattered or suited them.

It was also the period of the shaking of their rule, the age of the Encyclopedists and rationalists, who questioned their divine right and challenged their supreme power.

Mozart was aware of this; internationally minded, with a cultured middle-class background, he had travelled widely before he was twenty

in Germany, England, Italy and France. This, and his personal difficulties, made him a supporter of anti-feudal and progressive ideas, and in later life a fervent freemason—at a time when freemasonry, in Germany, was a serious antagonist of the *status quo* and advocate of the ideals of the rights of man.

At the age of twenty-two he entered the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg with high hopes and due respect for the officers of the church; by the time he was twenty-five he was thoroughly disillusioned. His letters are full of bitter comments on the Archbishop. Mozart, who had already written some twenty symphonies and dozens of lesser works and was engaged on the beautiful opera *Idomeneo* and the C Major Symphony, was treated as a rather useless servant, placed lower than the valets in the kitchen hierarchy.

After many rows with the Archbishop he walked out, commenting on the *entourage*. "These people are snakes and vipers; all base souls so disgustingly proud and yet always ready to crawl".

He made up his mind to try his fortune in Vienna, where the Emperor Joseph, son of Maria Theresa, reputed to be a keen musician, had his court. "I shall soon prove", said Mozart, "how beneficial Vienna is to us all". But he was soon disillusioned. Disgusted with the court minions, who refused to help him, he wrote on 28 June 1781, "the more inimical they are to you, the more proudly and contemptuously ought you to look down on them . . . It is the heart that ennobles a man; and though I am no Count, I have perhaps more honourable feeling than many a Count".

**Hand-to-Mouth**

Far from the nobility queuing up to engage him, Mozart led a hand-to-mouth existence in Vienna from the start. He barely managed to scrape a living by giving piano lessons. He put down his lack of success to not being showy enough:

"The grand principle here is not to make oneself too cheap, for that is utter ruin. The most pretentious always obtain the preference". (September 1781).

His letters at this period are full of cracks against the aristocracy, not to

mention the Emperor, who treated him very casually.

When he was at last called on to play at court, he had to play "on a piano which was out of tune, and three of the keys stuck fast. 'No matter', said the Emperor". Joseph and his other hoped-for patrons, all kept him on tenterhooks.

The search for patrons and the continual struggle to earn a livelihood, took much of Mozart's time; by composing at night, he managed in 1782 to produce a great quantity of splendid music (including *Il Seraglio*, two serenades for wind instruments, and the Haffner Symphony), but he was living on the poverty line: "I have now three pupils, which brings me in 18 ducats a month"—his only steady income.

However, thanks to the success of *Il Seraglio*, his financial position temporarily improved, and he was able to marry Constanze Weber—a marriage which would have been ideally happy, had it not been for Constanze's poor health and the loss, later, of four of their six children.

But the court still ignored him. Mozart seriously considered settling abroad. He wrote (7 August 1782):

"I believe I am capable of doing honour to any court. If Germany my beloved fatherland . . . will not accept me, then, in God's name, let France or England be enriched by one more German of talent . . ."

In 1783 he was again hard up, though his opera was still being performed "with the greatest applause". From then on his letters continually ask for loans. 1785 and 1786 were particularly bad years, and the great "Haydn" Quartets and *Figaro* were composed with the creditors on the doorstep.

When at long last, the Emperor favoured him so far as to appoint him Imperial Chamber Musician, his salary was only 800 gulden a year.

All through the next years—those of *Don Giovanni*, the beautiful piano quartets, the best of the trios, and of the great G Minor and E Flat Symphonies—he had to ask his friends for cash, in spite of the utmost economy at home. The wolf was kept from the door in 1789 by a tour of Germany, when King Frederick William commissioned some string

1. "Sans culotte" literally means "without breeches", and is a term dating from the French Revolution (when only the aristocrats wore breeches!), denoting the Republican masses.

2. *Mozart's Operas* by Professor E. Dent (Penguin).



quartets and gave him 100 francs and a gold snuff-box; and that winter the Emperor Joseph ordered a comic opera—*Così fan tutte*—which temporarily saved the situation. But then Joseph died, without leaving Mozart any provision for the future, and with the accession of Leopold II things became even blacker.

### Reactionary Court

Leopold, anti-radical and reactionary, had no soft spot for outspoken Freemasons like Mozart. He would not appoint him Kapellmeister, and while Haydn and Salieri "were allowed to produce their works to the best advantage, I was not even desired to play at court". He was not engaged among the musicians for the Frankfurt court festivities in 1790. All his humiliation bursts out in one letter of that year:

"If people could see into my heart I should feel almost ashamed — all there is cold, cold as ice . . . all seems to me so empty".

In 1791, in spite of a new job—Assistant(!) Kapellmeister of the Stephanskirche—things went from bad to worse. Yet however poor he was, he never failed to help his even more indigent friends. He agreed to write the *Magic Flute* for the benefit of the theatre manager, Schikaneder, who was pressed for money and who begged Mozart to compose a "magic" opera, which he was sure would redeem his fortunes. It was indeed a great success, and may have saved Schikaneder from ruin, but it did not help the composer financially.

He died on 4 December 1791, in extreme poverty and was buried in a pauper's grave. His wife, visiting the cemetery shortly after the funeral, could find no sign of the grave, even the cost of a cross over it having been thought too great an extravagance.

The troubles and ailments of Mozart's last years which hastened his death were largely due to the greed and ignorance of the ruling class on whom he was forced to rely for subsistence. Theirs is the fault that Mozart starved and worked himself to death, and that we have been deprived of the fruit of his later genius. He himself never directly blamed them, nor spoke in his letters of the regime or of politics; but we know that he was interested in the radical movement in Europe and read French revolutionary literature.<sup>3</sup>

3. *A Mozart Pilgrimage* (Novello). Also recommended are Holmes' *Life of Mozart* (Everyman), Mozart's Letters edited by Emily Anderson (Pelican).

## The Funniest Creature

By NAZIM HIKMET, the Turkish Poet.



Like the scorpion, brother,  
You are like the scorpion  
In a night of horror.  
Like the sparrow, brother,  
You are like the sparrow  
In his petty worries.  
Like the mussel, brother,  
You are like the mussel  
Shut in and quiet.  
You are dreadful, brother,  
Like the mouth of a dead volcano.  
And you are not one, alas!  
You are not five  
You are millions.  
You are like the sheep, brother,  
When the cattle-dealer, clad in your skin, lifts his stick  
Right away you join the herd  
Almost proud, you go running to the slaughter-house.  
So you are the funniest creature  
Funnier even than the fish  
That lives in the sea yet does not know the sea.  
And if there is so much tyranny on this earth  
It's thanks to you, brother,  
If we are starved, worn out,  
If we are skinned to the bones,  
If we are crushed like grapes to yield our wine—  
I can't bring myself to say it's all your fault,  
But a lot of it is, brother.

The fact that he was an active freemason and that he chose to set *Figaro* and the *Magic Flute*, shows where his sympathies lay.

Even if Da Ponte's version of *Figaro* was less outspokenly republican than Beaumarchais', Mozart replaced the latter's bitter prose with sharp musical point; and in *Figaro's* song "Say farewell now", he expressed his own feelings about the false heroism of war, and the misery of the soldier.

In contrast to his aversion to militarism and reaction was his great love for humanity. When twenty-six he turned from Catholicism to freemasonry, with its ideals of moral purification, its striving for the good of mankind and universal brotherhood; and in 1784 persuaded his father to join too. He threw himself heart and soul into the masonic activities, and wrote several fine works for their ceremonies.

The freemasons in Germany and Austria were at this period the leaders

of the only form of radicalism that had any voice or organisation in the Empire. Maria Theresa had ruthlessly suppressed them in 1764, and her son Joseph II disliked them, although he allowed them their freedom. Leopold his successor, considering the brotherhood a dangerous subversive body, forbade their existence, and many freemasons went into exile while others carried on underground.

Mozart put his whole heart into the opera, which was in a sense, his religious, moral and political *credo*. The beauty and solemnity of the music match the lofty sentiments in the text. It is a sort of hymn in praise of truth and justice, brotherly love and the nobility of man, composed round a very silly story.

On Mozart's 200th birthday we of the Left can salute him both "as the most flawless musical genius the world has even known" and as the "sansculotte"—first and greatest of musicians for peace!



# LUNCH WITH PALME DUTT

**LONDON**

By J. H.

I WAS thrilled when an old friend undertook to bring him to lunch. For years I had read the monthly paper *Palme Dutt* edits and I knew his books, especially the memorable one on India. What I dearly wanted to see was what sort of a man wielded that remarkable pen.

He came into the small Soho restaurant in a well-worn overcoat and hat, gazing through thick glasses and looking for all the world like a professor temporarily out of his element. But he was immediately at ease at the corner table and putting us at ease by asking about South Africa. He knew more about the present situation than one expected and he spoke words of warm praise for the "wonderful struggle" that some people were maintaining there. I had said something about J. H. Hofmeyr and the liberal mind. A slow smile gleamed in his deep-set eyes as he recalled that Hofmeyr was at Oxford about 1915 when he himself was a student there.

That gave me the opening I was waiting for. "Tell us about yourself", I asked him. "I've often wondered what made you a Marxist such a long time ago".

"My father was an Indian. He won a scholarship to study in England, the one scholarship"—and there was the late-arriving smile again—"open to three hundred million people! He qualified as a doctor and, after marrying a Swedish woman here in England, practised at Cambridge. I spent my boyhood there, winning, from the age of nine, scholarships that got me all my formal education. My father, by the way, was a Tolstoyan. He corresponded with Tolstoy". (From whose writings I thought to myself later, Mahatma Gandhi received the inspiration of passive resistance).

Our guest wanted to leave the subject of himself but I held him to it.

"Well, as a boy I noticed the contrast between the rich mansions of Cambridge and its slums. Later I went up to Oxford under the illusion that the place was a home of learning. Then when the first world war began, I was struck by a curious thing. A group of Oxford professors, including some historians, issued a statement saying that it was quite

clear that Germany was to blame for the war. About the same time a group of professors in Germany, including some historians, issued a statement saying that it was quite clear that Britain was to blame for the war.

"Even a humble student could see that something was amiss. I began to read history to find out the truth for myself. For my tutor I wrote a long essay on the partition of Africa between the European powers in the period between 1870 and 1914. I began to discover the facts about modern imperialism. 'I am afraid, Mr. Dutt,' my tutor said, 'that you have gone too deeply into all this.'"

Early in 1917, in a student debate in the Oxford Union (Mr. Dutt recalled) he had proposed a motion to the effect that a second revolution would be needed in Russia to complete the work of the first that had just occurred. And, sure enough, history obliged Mr. Dutt, for the first time but not for the last time. By October 1917 the Russian Revolution was in full flood on the lines foreseen by the Oxford student.

Dutt left Oxford with a set of testimonials from his teachers. They all referred to his intellectual ability and expressed the hope that he would find a suitable post "in spite of his peculiar views", or words to that effect. Which is the kind of testimonial that is a polite warning to possible employers. For Dutt had been reading, mainly in German, everything by Karl Marx that he could lay hands on.

If Dutt ever got a job at that age, he could not have held it long. In July 1921 (as he recalled in his journal thirty years afterwards), he became the first editor of *Labour Monthly*, and "thus early began to set forth his views in Notes of the Month, as if the knowledge of all the affairs of the world were at his command—as is the way of an editor who had reached the mature age of twenty-five years".

The first number of the journal (of which *Palme Dutt* has remained the editor to this day) contained articles by Lenin, by Barbusse, and by the British socialists, Leonard Woolf and G. D. H. Cole.

*Palme Dutt*, now in his sixtieth year, has thus made, throughout his whole adult life, a month-by-month

analysis of the course of world politics. In a lucid forceful style that is the controlled instrument of his quiet, confident passion, this man has for thirty-five unbroken years continued to interpret and to chart the course of human history. Today his journal has a world-wide reputation. He is, however, the first to acknowledge that he has in his time made plenty of mistakes. But is there another editor who has been so consistently right in broad principle or who predicted so consistently the shape of things to come during all the eventful years that lie between 1921 and 1956?

What an era his life has spanned! When Dutt began to write his monthly commentary, the Soviet Union was in its fourth year, still winning finally the war of intervention started by the European powers in their attempt to strangle the Russian Revolution in its infancy. Gandhi had just entered on leadership of the Indian National Congress and was proclaiming his programme of non-violent non-cooperation to win independence for India. Since, then, as Dutt wrote in 1951, "humanity has marched forward in seven-league boots. There has been a glorious advance of liberation and socialism throughout the world: the first, firm steps of the greatest transformation in the human record, the transformation of the basis of society from the old class order towards the future classless society. This change is no easy rose-strewn path. Every step forward has been won not without travail; light and shade; agony and triumph; but through it all the march goes forward at an accelerating pace; the army of liberation swells its ranks; every decade sees new ground won for ever. These three decades have proved the character of our epoch".

From the beginning Dutt had realised the tremendous significance of India's struggle to free herself from British domination. (He was until 1946 refused a passport to visit India). At the lunch table he spoke with appreciation of India's second five-year-plan, now under way. He observed that India was greatly strengthened by the fact that she could now, if need be, look to Russia and to China for the technical aid that the West was unlikely to give her. That ex-



THIS is not a review! Apparently so much has already been written by way of reviews in almost all the leading papers of the country that readers of *Fighting Talk* who can read Afrikaans will already have seen it. At any rate we are told on good authority that it is selling by thousands, and an English translation is promised shortly. Personally if I had been asked by a publisher whether an English edition would justify publication, I would have said "no", at any rate so far as South Africa is concerned. People who are really anxious to know what is going on in the minds of Afrikaans-speaking churchmen can usually read Afrikaans enough to digest this slight, and easily read book. But we must not forget the overseas reading public: in fact there seems to be a tendency in certain world Church organizations to think that the salvation of South Africa hinges on the conversion of the Dutch Reformed Church. Those who know the realities of the situation are fully aware that there is no such simplification of our situation.

Nevertheless it is all to the good that a man who holds a key position in the Dutch Reformed Church

plained why the British press had got so upset about the great welcome the Russian leaders had received in India during their recent visit.

We talked of other things, of problems of political strategy and of the slowness of the British working class in understanding the meaning of empire ("In Hyde Park even now if you say anything derogatory of the British navy, the crowd becomes hostile!")

Reluctantly I at last called a taxi and took our guest back to his office. He mentioned that he was shortly going to Moscow for a conference.

"They will be glad to honour you there," I remarked.

"Do you think so?" he replied.

"Yes," I assured him. "Your words have reached much further than you know".

"It is very kind of you to say that", he said shyly. Then a minute later he had quickly taken leave of us, jumped out of the cab and disappeared among the people thronging the pavement.

I shall always remember that lunch and our quiet, thoughtful guest of honour. Palme Dutt is a great man. No wonder *Labour Monthly* is banned in Strijdom's South Africa.

# Talking Out of Turn . . .

Some Thoughts on Prof. Keet's book

By the Rev. A. W. Blaxall

(Prof. Keet is on the staff of the oldest theological college in the D.R.C., at Stellenbosch, in which position large numbers of young ministers have come under his influence) should have the courage to make his views known in such a public manner. That he has held these views for a long time is no secret, which raises the question as to why he has taken so long to seize his courage with both hands and declare himself through the pages of a book.

If I may hazard an answer to that question I would say that for many years the good dominee has been in the same position as many brethren of his profession in all the churches. There is the fear of "talking out of turn"; the inner hope that secretly it may be possible to wield more influence, and change peoples' hearts and minds rather than by public utterance. Now at last as Prof. Keet says in his introduction, the stage has been reached in the Union when it becomes a duty for every man who believes he has something to say to say it. In other words, we have reached a crisis position in South Africa when nothing matters but to speak the truth without fear of the consequences.

I am reminded of an incident that happened to me more than a score of years ago in that very same seminary at Stellenbosch where Prof. Keet teaches. I had been invited to listen to a distinguished overseas theologian who was to address staff and students. He did so, speaking with great vigour, not hiding his impressions that a serious position was building up in South Africa (and that was about 1935!) After the lecture I was asked for tea at the principal's house. I had an opportunity to chat with the dominee with whom the visitor was staying in Cape Town, so I naturally enquired how he enjoyed having such a guest. Quite frankly he told me that he had himself said to Dr. . . . "The one thing that I envy you for, doctor, is the fact that so many Non-Whites come here to talk with you. I have always longed to get closer to them at that level, but I have had to think of the consequences with my

Kerkraad." "And what did he say to that?" I queried. With a twinkle in his eye Dr. . . . said "He replied at once: 'Damn the consequences'". In those far-away days that was all interesting and amusing. Today it is tragic.

It is difficult to repress thoughts such as these. If Professor Keet has held for many years the radical views he now writes in *Suid-Afrika—Waarheen?*, and if a steady stream of candidates for the ministry has been under his influence, are there none of them anywhere who were changed in their hearts and minds? We understand from those who attended the two inter-church conferences, in Pretoria in 1953 and the Witwatersrand University in 1954, that there were at any rate a few younger men who spoke openly concerning the fundamental unity of the human race: *but always in generalised terms*. Never, to the best of my knowledge, has a voice been lifted on any specific issue, however great the suffering caused by enforced racial discrimination. I am aware that if friends of the Dutch Reformed Church read these words some of them will say to me: "But how do you know what we do? Perhaps we are working behind the scenes". To such friends I would say with all charity: the time is getting late; if you have worked like leaven there should by now be some rising in the dough, but we do not see it.

I wrote above that there is a tendency in some quarters to think that a change of heart on racial questions among members of the Dutch Reformed Church could alter the whole national policy and practice. Does this infer that all the other churches are already solidly convinced that all is not well with us, and that as a people we are out of step with the rest of the Christian world?

Anyone who imagines such a thing is living in a fool's paradise.

Two years ago, on the eve of a biennial meeting of the Christian Council of South Africa (a body co-ordinating 23 churches and missions) I wrote an article in this magazine on the challenges which would confront that meeting when they were



faced with two reports from committees of their own. The one report was to be on Bantu Education, the other on Threats to Religious Liberty. It is natural to assume that those reports were carefully considered, and that certain actions were planned, although no such news reached the press. Two years have again passed, so presumably the Council is due to meet again. Will they receive further reports? When will the public be taken into confidence and told what the Christian part of the national conscience really feels?

This much can be said—the root of the trouble lies in the fact that negotiation and consultation is inevitably a slow process. Advanced elements are held back by fear of hardening the views of less progressive, while those who are conservative by nature are for ever haunted by “fear of the consequences”. And in the meanwhile the masses of the people suffer, and the forces which work for social change refuse to be held back. As Professor Keet implies: If ever there was a time for courageous speaking and writing it is NOW. The churches by virtue of the fact that they are composed of individuals, cannot live in a state of eternal tension; the time must come when apparently irreconcilable forces must be made plain so that all people of good-will can decide for themselves where truth and justice are to be found, and what really are the principles of righteousness.

When Dr. D. F. Malan was first appointed Prime Minister he said, in his first national broadcast, that he hoped he would have behind him the Churches of the land. Within a few days, Mrs. Kathleen Bliss, an internationally known Christian writer, wrote that by that very appeal Dr. Malan linked himself up with the whole world for there is no such thing as national churches. The Church is a universal body, however much it be fragmented, and any section which attempts to step aside from the stream of universal conviction will either have to adjust itself, or die.

A few days ago I was driving through an African township in the western areas of the Reef. My companion was an overseas church leader of distinction and what he said to me was, in effect, that the reason for overseas concern about South Africa is the love that one part of the universal church has for the other.

There are people, both inside and

## BOOKS

THERE could be good reason for the recent spate of novels about Africa. For the whole continent—Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, the Gold Coast, the Central African Federation and the Union of South Africa—seethes with the spirit and turmoil of change, of conflict and awakening. From such material a Zola or a Gorki would create masterpieces to shake the literate world. But as each new publishing season pours on to the market another dozen novels with Africa as the background, it becomes apparent that the reality of Africa is passing most novelists by. No doubt, the publishers' easy acceptance of steamy jungles, lush with mysterious tropic witch-craft and black ritual, has opened a lucrative groove, into which contemporary novelists are sliding, easily and comfortably. Wasn't this, after all, the formula of Stuart Cloete's best selling “Congo Song,” which finally reaped the golden harvest of a pocket-book edition?

But in part, the explanation lies also in the post-war shrinkage of Empire. The type and paper now expended on “mysterious Africa” was once lavished on tales of tiger hunting, ruby-laden maharanees of indescribable beauty, and strange oriental visionaries on the banks of the Ganges. But history has shifted the scene. The mem-sahib and the sporting colonel have departed from Nehru's India, and the colourless, unromantic Soviet engineers have moved in to build new steel-works. The glamour of technicolour has gone. But there is still Africa! Or so it seems.

Many have tried to take up from where Stuart Cloete left off. The supreme exponent is probably Johanna Moosdorf, whose “Flight to Africa” was published last year in English translation from the German. The

out of South Africa, who seem to see a large section of the people, even Christians, intent on committing a sort of hari-kari, and they long to save them from such unnecessary suffering and waste of life. Perhaps it is for such reasons that *Suid-Afrika—Waarheen?* when translated into “Whither South Africa?” will be avidly read by thousands.

# OVERTONES OF

hero shuttles back and forth between the tropical forests of Central Africa and the Soviet-occupied zone of Berlin. This allows for everything that adds up to Hollywood film rights, women's magazine serials and pocket-book editions with lurid covers—for the lust and savagery of darkest Africa, as well as the Dulles slant on the cold war. Faintly echoing the Cloete pattern, the seedy, White remittance men and administrators philosophise over the riddle of their own souls and actions, like first-year psychology students at a university. There is, of course, a Woman—not a character so much as a symbol—who apparently perceives something of the awesome mystery of black Africa by gazing vacantly into space before—appropriately—drinking poison. There are also, inevitably, the bewitching African damsels who flit from bed to bed; and there is voodoo, ritual dancing and weird and ghostly rites. “Primitive Africa”, says the dust-jacket, “with its modes of life unknown to the West, its witchcraft, its sorcery, has taken possession of the handful of White men.” It is a well-worn and typical note. But overriding it all is the recurrent theme of violence which is the hallmark of so many of the African novels of today.

The note of crude force and violence is echoed against a less romantic background in Dan Jacobson's first novel, “The Trap,” published last year. Unlike Johanna Moosdorf, Jacobson takes his theme from the reality of life in South Africa. A European and an African join forces to steal sheep from a Karoo farm. When the conspiracy is about to be revealed, the European turns police informer, the police fasten on the African scapegoat, and the European goes free. The fatal “White man's justice” of South Africa is meted out. Farmer and Judas beat the handcuffed prisoner, while the police sergeant stands by, waiting to slam the doors of the prison van. This slim tale is less than a novel. It is a short story of some promise. Nowhere does the writer succeed in getting under the skin of his characters, discovering their motivations and their thoughts. Nowhere does he succeed in making his reader feel that here, in this tale, is revealed something significant about the life



# VIOLENCE

and the people of South Africa. In the end, "The Trap" is the merest incident, a fragment of something that happens, but somehow without meaning, like a street-brawl seen from the window of a passing tram.

One would expect a writer of Basil Davidson's experience and exceptionally acute perception for what is significant and true, to come more closely to grips with reality. His latest novel, just released by Jonathan Cape, "The Rapids," manages to steer well clear of the well-worn theme of "mysterious Africa, its witchcraft, its sorcery."

Instead, it takes its theme from life. The setting, somewhere in West Africa, could be anywhere where the African people are beginning, for the first time, to organise themselves for the protection and advance of their rights. Into those stirrings are drawn two men, one Black, one White; ordinary men in many ways, in their outlook and their history, and yet extraordinary in their way, at the moment of crisis, they throw off the set patterns of "master and man-servant" which are the heart of social relationships in Africa, and emerge as men in their own right. Extraordinary; and yet not unique. For Africa has many such men today, and their numbers are growing.

Sabalu is not unique. Different, yes, because he has learnt something of the art of political organisation from his work on the copper mines, and from a European called Simon. "He was an engineer . . . he spoke for us." "And what became of that man, O Sabalu?" "They put him in prison. And then sent him to Europe." Sabalu is the solid, responsible heart of the new Congress movement. And Captain Stanton is the solid, conservative pioneer, who has cut himself adrift from the British Isles. His home is Africa; and along with a knowledge of its native tongues, he has imbibed all of White Africa's prejudices, and intolerance. But still, somewhere deep beneath the surface, there is honesty and humanity, which finally move him into strange new paths. Against a background of European agitation there rises a wave of African anger; a peaceful Congress march to present a petition to the Governor ends, as so many peaceful African demonstra-

tions do, in violence and blood. But out of the midst of conflict emerge two men of new stature — a Black man confident, unafraid, conscious that a people have been set in motion, and can never again be stilled. And a White man, who has seen with startling clarity, that the only future for himself in Africa is with the marching millions of the native people.

This, the story of the new men of Africa emerging in violence from the patterns of colonialism, is a story well and convincingly told. But it deserves to be better told than this. For Davidson, the novelist, writes with a less acute and thrilling pen than Davidson, the observer in "Report on Southern Africa." His minor characters are devoid of flesh and blood, props to the story but not part of it. And some of the minor situations are

as mechanically contrived as a "deus-ex-machina."

But these, perhaps, are minor flaws. "The Rapids" deals with the reality of life. And thus, despite its flaws, it stands amongst the most significant African novels of recent years. It is a good book; perhaps the only good recent novel with such a background. But the *great* novels about the great events of Africa remain to be written. It is this thought that lends interest to Harry Bloom's "Episode in the Transvaal", to be reviewed in this column next month.

"The Trap," by Dan Jacobson. Published by Heidenfeld and Nicholson. Price 8/6.

"The Rapids," by Basil Davidson. Published by Jonathan Cape. Price 13/6.

L. BERNSTEIN

## THE ARAB WORLD

BRITAIN has paid £1 million a month for years for the purpose of keeping and controlling an army in Jordan. The expulsion of General Glubb means that at last the people of Jordan have realized how unnecessary it was for their country to remain a puppet state under British control. This is yet another welcome sign of the awakening of the Arab world and of its desire to attain independence.

In a new Penguin book, *The Arabs*, by Edward Atiyah, the whole historical background is described against which one can understand the great significance of recent events. The contempt that White men have long had for Brown or Black people has prevented a proper appreciation of the place of the Arabs in history. Now the rivalry between the socialist and the capitalist countries has made both sides compete for the friendship of 50 million Arabs in the Middle East. In this situation the British have begun to be more respectful to a culture they have neglected in the past. But it is the old story of too little and too late. The Arabs are suspicious of their old masters. They are moving, slowly if clumsily, towards the idea of a federation of Moslem states. British domination of Jordan was an obstacle to closer union between Jordan and Iraq, Syria, and the Lebanon. Nor do the men who rule Jordan need British financial support any longer. They can get money from Saudi Arabia which is rolling in dollars, thanks to the plentiful oil she sells to the United States.

Mr. Atiyah wrote the last chapter of his

book before recent events took place. These events show that he is probably mistaken in his hope and belief that the Arab states will continue to rely on the West. Himself a Christian Arab, the author has underestimated the fierce passion for independent status and dignity, something that colonialism can never really concede.

"The Arabs," by Edward Atiyah. A Penguin Book.

J

## Indonesia

THE Afro-Asian conference at Bandung, just a year ago, was sponsored by Indonesia. How that country reached her present position and policy of "positive neutrality" in foreign affairs is a story as impressive as India's achievement but it is much less widely known and appreciated.

For that reason this new book is welcome. In *The Republic of Indonesia* Dorothy Woodman has mastered her subject and knows all the relevant materials. What is more, she spares no one in her desire to tell the truth, certainly not the Dutch whose blind stupidity led them steadily to final disaster when they lost their greatest colony. Nor the British whose last-minute attempt to help the Dutch is properly exposed. In her last chapter the author asks whether the present rulers of Indonesia realize that the victory of Asian nationalism is not the end but must be the prelude to social change.


"The Republic of Indonesia," by Dorothy Woodman. (Cresset Press.)

J



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